

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Saturday, May 25. 1706.

WE have been much talking of Emulation of Generals; for my part, I think 'tis a most necessary Ambition: while great Men strive, who shall deserve best of their Country, the Contention is noble and truly acceptable.

The Generals now contending, aft their Part to obtain the greatest Praise; and the Field is so wide, the Success so great; that I think the Contention, who does most, is one of the vainest things in the World; and as the Persons themselves are far enough from entertaining such things, or encouraging them; we ought not to show our Folly so much, to form a suspicious Jealousie between the Men, whose Glory rises faster than our Praise.

The Successes in *Spain* are great in their Degree with those here, and if I have not

said so much of them, it is, because I do not find, we have so just an Authority for the particulars; no *Lisbon* Post or Express being yet come in: when we have the exact Account of Affairs there, I shall speak to them at large.

Mean time, I cannot but observe, how the wonderful Successes of the Duke of *Marlborough* flush us with strange Hopes; I am not for lessening, neither what is done, nor what is like to be done; I make no question, but the *French* Army are entirely broke, that the best of their Troops, both Men and Horses, are lost and cut off; that they are in a great Consternation, and that great Improvements are already, and will yet be made of it. I make no doubt, but *Ghent* and *Bruges*, with all the little Places both of *Brabant* and *Flanders*, will follow the

the Fate of the City of *Brussels*, and that the Duke will be Master of all the open Country from the Gates of *Namur* to *Ostend*.

I doubt not, but the Consequences of this Battle will extend to every Branch of the Confederacy; the *Germans* will take Heart, the Duke of *Savoy* be encourag'd, Prince *Eugene* will toils up his Cap, and long to be striking a Blow to second it. Nor do I question abundance of Consequences attending this Victory, which are not yet foreseen.

But come, Gentlemen; *when all is said*, let us consider, what we are to with for as the Consequence; Extremes make wise Men ridiculous; and I cannot but smile, when I hear our People pulling the *French* King Limb from Limb, how they fall a sharing this Bear-Skin, and every one will have a Piece.

Nay, we have been cutting out all *France* among us, the Drapers will have *Morlaix*, because they want Canvas and Douglas; the honest Sailors desire *Nants* and *Rochel*, because they love Punch and want Brandy. The Good Fellow will be content with nothing but *Bordeaux*, for he can't be without the Claret; the Ladies must have *Lyons* and its Appendences, because they want Alamodes and Lustrings; the Beaus must have *Montpellier* for the Essences and Perfumes; and thus a peice of *France* won't serve us, but we must have all; and very particular we are upon this Head.

Others are for a personal War upon the King of *France* himself, and here we are very merry, conjecturing what Condition he is in; some will have him dumb; some raging; others say he must hang himself, and the like; then if he won't hang himself, we are to do it for him; and he must have no Quarter, no Peace, nothing but pulling him down will serve, without examining who is to come in his Room.

Well, Gentlemen, these are very merry Stories, and very pleasant to hear; but let us argue a little rationally now upon the Subject of Victory, and not be too forward to think all our own.

The *French* King, and his Court, and all

his Affairs are without doubt in a most exceeding Hurry, the Surprise very great, the Consternation inexpressible; but cool Thoughts will succeed all these things, and they are, *without over valuing them*, a vigilant People; so you will find, they will immediately enter upon Measures to recollect themselves, and take breath; we are not to suppose them *all beat to the Devil*, as the Gentleman that brought us the News express'd it, — and therefore I'll ask pardon to enter into a Scheme of Conjectures; which I only offer in the Room of, and to set against the Extravagancies above; and I leave time, and the Event of things, to answer for the Reasonableness of my Guesses.

And as this is an odd Work, and must be attended with Uncertainties; I must tell the Reader, I am answerable for no more than Probabilities, and shall account no farther.

In this Guess, I will suppose first, *what I think* the *French* will do, or what they may do in this very nice Conjunction; and next, what I think the Duke of *Marlborough* will do.

As to the *French*, we see, they have abandon'd *Louvain*, *Malines*, *Brussels*, &c. and drawn the Garrisons and Magazines off.

Whoever looks back to the Year 1672, will find, the *French* having possess'd great Part of the united Provinces, by a strong Torrent of Victories, when he found the Imperialists and the *Dutch* join'd, and that his numerous Garrisons took up so many Troops, that he could not keep any Army in the Field; he abandon'd all the Towns, as hastily as he gain'd them, that he might not be match'd in the Field.

The *French* will abandon all those Towns they think they cannot keep, in order by their Garrisons, to help form a new Army; and first, let us see what an Army they may form; and secondly, what they will do with it, when it is form'd.

First, as to their Army; the Account of their broken disorder'd Remnants of an Army, such as they are by all our printed Accounts, are not above 23000 Men; and among

mong these allow for the wounded, the Sick, &c. suppose them 20000, these are but a poor few, and the Battle must stand for 30000 Men, kill'd, taken and run away; for at the Fight they could not be less than 50000.

Now to these, the *Mareschal de Marfin* will join his Detachment, which was 18 Battalions, and upon this occasion being join'd with such Regiments, as are taken out of the Towns they shall abandon, may make up at least 10000 Men, all Foot.

There is no doubt, but Expresses are sent away to the *Mareschal Villars* on the *Upper Rhine*, to make a large Detachment of at least 15000 Men from thence, and to act with the rest upon the Defensive.

From the Garrisons of *Treves, Saarbruck, Saar-Louis, Metz, Thionvil*, and all the small Places on the *Moselle*, 12000 Men may be drawn without Prejudice; and thus I cannot doubt, but you will see the *French* appear with near 60000 Men in the Field again, making up the rest from the Towns in *Flanders*, which they will abandon.

The next Question before me is, what shall these do? and as *Mr. Overquerque* observes very well in his Letter to the States, the *French* will be join'd with a great Detachment, and his Grace the Duke of *Marlborough* in his Letter to *Mr. Secretary Harley*, notes they will MAKE A STAND.

And this is my Answer to the Question, they will MAKE A STAND; That they will fight you again, no Man can suppose me in my Wits to imagine, much less that I should suggest it here; nor do I believe, they would fight again, tho' they were two to one in Number; for as first, their Men are out of Heart; so secondly, it is not their Business to fight, nor indeed was it so before, if I think right.

And therefore, when I say, they will make a Stand, I am to be understood, they will intrench, fortify, post themselves to Advantage, and so as you will not think proper to attack them. If too weak, they will always lye under the Cannon of some strong Town, to cover it, and be cover'd

by it; and thus they will dodge upon the Defensive, and put a Check to your Proceeding, if possible, without Fighting.

If any Man says, the Duke will force them to fight, or assault them in their Trenches, let them be never so strong; to this, I must say, it is not an easie thing to force 50 or 60000 Men to fight against their Wills; at *Hochstet*, and here, had the *French* refus'd to fight, retreated, intrench'd and fortified their Camps; I will not say, you could have forced them to it; but their own Assurances procur'd them these two Disasters.

But the Case now differs, *Flanders* is a large Country, full of most invincible Fortifications; and 'tis easie for an Army to find Protection among so many Fortresses.

If the Confederates go to besieging of Towns, that would be to compleat the Ruin of the finest Troops, the World ever saw, and losing Time into the Bargain; since while we are beating out our Mens Brains against Stone Walls, the Season and Opportunity of improving the Victory will be lost. The *French* therefore under the Cannon of the strong Towns will be able to make a Stand, and yet act safely.

And this I take to be the only thing they have left to do; for all their Business is to gain time, that they may not be push'd too far, but have the Winter before them to recover, and perhaps offer Conditions of Peace.

And this leads me to enquire, what it is we are doing; what do we fight for; what is the End of it all? The honest End is Peace, and the best Reward of Victory is Peace; an honourable safe and lasting Peace: which I believe every honest Man will join with me in a Petition for.

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